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881 262 after the birth of the first child; they are also required to abstain from honey during each subsequent pregnancy; and in their case, too, a chief or elder (preferably a relative) officiates, and not a woman[1]."

753 761 We may now proceed to the ritual customs connected with death and burial. In all the Great Andaman tribes disease and death are supposed to be due to the spirits of the jungle and the sea. The subject will be dealt with in the next chapter.

764 On the occurrence of a death the news quickly spreads through the camp, and all the women collect round the body and, sitting down, weep loudly until they are exhausted. The women then retire and the men come and weep over the corpse. All the adult members of the community then proceed to cover themselves with a wash of common clay smeared evenly over their bodies and limbs. This clay is of the kind called *odu* in *Aka-Jeru* and *og* in *Aka-Bea*. The nearer relatives and more intimate friends of the deceased also plaster some of the same clay on their heads.

Some of the women, generally, but not necessarily, relatives, remove any ornaments the dead person may have been wearing, shave the head and decorate the body. This decoration consists of lines of fine pattern in white clay alternating with bands of red paint. A band of red paint is placed across the upper lip passing from ear to ear and the ears themselves are smeared with the pigment. The greater the estimation in which the deceased person is held the greater is the care lavished upon this the last decoration.

Thus decorated the body is prepared for burial. The legs and arms are flexed so that the knees come up under the chin and the fists rest against the cheeks. A *Cyrena* shell (or sometimes in these days a steel knife) is placed in the closed hand. A sleeping mat is wrapped round the body, and over this a number of the large palm leaves known as *kobo* (*Aka-Jeru*) are arranged and the whole is made into a bundle and tied up with rope. Before the ropes are all tied the relatives of the dead person take their last farewell by gently blowing on the face of the corpse.

[1] Man, *op. cit.* p. 133.

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The male relatives and friends then proceed to the spot selected for the burial, one of them carrying the corpse slung on his back. If the burial place can be reached by canoe, no hesitation is shown in making use of a canoe for the purpose. There are not, so far as could be discovered, any rules as to which of the men shall undertake the burial. Such relatives as brother, father, son or husband generally take the leading part. The women take no part in the actual burial. There are two modes of disposing of the body, in a grave dug in the ground, or upon a platform placed in a tree. The latter is considered the more honourable form of burial, and is only adopted in the case of a man or woman dying in the prime of life. The same grave is not used twice, in the case of interment, though a new grave may be made close to an old one. The natives said that the same tree might be used several times for platform-burial, but there was no opportunity of proving this statement. There are not, generally speaking, any regular burying grounds. Any convenient spot may be chosen so long as it is at some little distance from the camp. It does happen, however, that certain spots are fairly regularly used. In the case of one burial that I witnessed the spot chosen was about a mile distant from the camp, the journey being made in a canoe, and there were already five or six graves at the same place.

In the case of interment a hole is dug three or four feet in depth, the digging being done with an adze and a digging stick, and sometimes a wooden dish is used to scoop out the soil. The body is placed in the hole and the ropes tied round it are severed. The body is placed slightly on its side facing the east. I asked some of the natives the reason for this orientation, and was told that if the custom were not observed the sun would not rise and the world would be left in darkness. A pillow of wood is placed under the head, and a log of wood at each side of the corpse. Sometimes some object that has been worn by the deceased, such as a belt or necklace, is placed in the grave. The soil is then replaced, all present helping. Beside the grave a fire is lighted and some water contained in a bamboo vessel or in a nautilus shell is left for the corpse. In some cases the bow belonging to the deceased, if it be a man, and a few

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764 arrows are placed on the grave. In the *Aka-Čari* tribe a harpoon and line are substituted for the bow and arrows, and a bamboo harpoon shaft is erected vertically in the grave near the right hand of the body. In the same tribe it is usual to suspend near the grave a bundle of the prepared fibre of *Anadendron paniculatum* such as is used for making thread. There are probably slight variations of custom in this respect in different tribes or even in different cases in the same tribe.

In the case of platform-burial a platform of sticks is erected in a tree, twelve feet or so above the ground, and the body is placed thereon, lying sideways facing the east. Water and fire are placed beneath the tree. Mr Man states that in cases of tree-burial they are careful not to select a fruit tree or one of a species used for the manufacture of their canoes, bows and other implements. Such natives as I questioned on this point said that this was not so and that they would use any suitable tree whether one that was useful or not. I was unable definitely to prove the point, as I did not see a single instance of tree-burial during my stay in the islands. A tree that is sometimes used for this purpose is the *Ficus laccifera*, which as we have seen has a special connection with the spirits of new-born children. On the coast, mangrove trees, such as the *Rhizophora* or *Bruguiera*, are said to be used.

765 When the burial is completed, whether in a grave or a tree, plumes made of shredded palm-leaf stem *koro* (*Aka-Jeru*) or *ara* (*Aka-Bea*) are attached near the graves to the branches of trees or shrubs or to sticks put up for the purpose. This is done, it is said, to show any native, who might inadvertently approach, that there has been a burial at the spot. The undergrowth is cleared for a short distance round the grave.

The men then return to the camp, where the women have been busy packing up all belongings. Plumes of shredded palm-leaf stem (*koro*) are put up at the entrance to the camp, to show chance visitors that there has been a death. The camp is then deserted, the natives moving to some other camping ground until the period of mourning is over, when they may, if they wish, return to the deserted village. No one goes near the grave again until the period of mourning is over.

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766 of by cutting it into pieces and burning it on a fire. The natives say that if this be done the 'blood' and the 'fat' of the dead man go up to the sky and this removes all danger to the living from the dead man. The blood of persons so burnt is seen in the sky at sunset. If a man were killed in a fight between two communities and his body remained with the enemy, they would dispose of it in this way. If the friends secured the body they would bury it in the usual way. It may be worthy of remark
766 that this custom of burning the bodies of slain enemies is
266 perhaps the real origin of the belief that the Andamanese are or were cannibals. We can well imagine that when, as must have often happened, sailors venturing to land on the islands have been killed and the survivors have seen the bodies of their companions cut up and placed on fires, they would readily conclude that they were witnessing a cannibal feast. There can be no doubt whatever that since the islands were occupied in 1858 the inhabitants have not practised cannibalism, and there is no good reason to suppose that they once followed the custom and then abandoned it.

• 764 The burial is conducted, if possible, on the day of the death. If it has to be deferred till the morrow all the inhabitants of the camp keep awake. The relatives sit round the corpse weeping at intervals, while some of the men take it in turn to sing songs during the hours of darkness. This, so they say, is to keep away the spirits that have caused the death, and so prevent them from further mischief. When a man or woman dies in the prime of
[152] life after a short illness the friends and relatives often break out in anger which they express in different ways. A man will shout threats and curses at the spirits that he conceives to be responsible for the death of his friend. He may pick up his bow and discharge his arrows in all directions, or in some other way give expression to his angry feelings. On the occasion of a death in one of the *Akar-Bale* villages the relatives expressed their grief by cutting down a coconut tree that grew there.

765 The period of mourning for near relatives—parent, adult child, consort, brother or sister—lasts for several months. In the case of a young child only the parents mourn. The essentials

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round the neck either in front or behind. The photograph in Plate XVIII shows a woman wearing the skull of her deceased sister. Like all their other possessions these relics are lent or exchanged, passing from one person to another, until sometimes a skull may be found in the possession of a man who does not know to whom it belonged. The other bones are also preserved. The limb bones are generally painted with red paint and white clay and are kept in the roof of the hut. They are not treasured as much as the skull and jaw, and are often mislaid. Thus, while every camp is sure to contain a number of skulls and jaw-bones it is comparatively rarely that the limb bones are to be found. The other bones are made into strings, such bones as those of the hand and foot being used as they are, while ribs and vertebrae are broken up into pieces of convenient size. The bones or pieces of bone are attached to a length of rope by means of thread and the string thus produced is often ornamented with the dried yellow skin of the *Dendrobium* and with shells. The whole is covered with red paint. These strings of bone are worn as cures for and preventives of illness. If a man has a head-ache, for instance, he will attach one of the strings round his head. They are in almost constant use in every camp and every man and woman is sure to possess one or two. The bones are made into strings by the female relatives of the deceased and are then given away as presents.

In the North Andaman the skull of a baby is preserved by enclosing it in a small basket just big enough to contain it, the top of the basket, which is narrower than the lower part, being only finished after the skull is placed inside, so that it cannot fall out and can only be removed by unfastening the rim of the basket. Mr Man states that children's skulls are not carried in baskets, except temporarily as when travelling, fishing, etc., but are preserved from injury by being entirely covered with string[1]. This applies only to the tribes of the South and Middle Andaman.

At about the time that the bones are recovered there takes place a special ceremony referred to as "taking off the clay" or

[1] Man, *loc. cit.* p. 143.

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controlling the sentiment and directing it towards social ends. We have seen that the dance is the expression of the unity and harmony of the society, and by permitting at the dance the free expression of personal vanity the society ensures that the individual shall learn to feel, even if only subconsciously, that his personal value depends upon the harmony between himself and his fellows.

The bride and bridegroom are painted with white clay, and wear ornaments of *Dentalium* shell on the day following their marriage. We have seen that marriage involves a change of social status, and we may say that it gives an increased social value to the married pair, the social position of a married man or woman being of greater importance and dignity than that of a bachelor or spinster. They are, after marriage, the objects of higher regard on the part of their fellows than they were before. It is therefore appropriate that the personal value of the bride and bridegroom should be expressed so that both they themselves and their fellows should have their attention drawn to it, and this is clearly the function of the painting and ornaments.

After the completion of any of the more important of the initiation ceremonies, such as the eating of turtle, the initiate is painted with white clay and red paint and wears ornaments of *Dentalium* shell. This is exactly parallel to the painting of the bride and bridegroom. The initiate, by reason of the ceremony he has been through, has acquired new dignity and importance, and by having fulfilled the requirements of custom has deserved the approval of his fellows. The decoration of his body after the ceremony is thus the expression of his increased social value.

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A corpse, before burial, is decorated in the same manner as the body of a dancer. This, we may take it, is the means by which the surviving relatives and friends express their regard for the dead, i.e. their sense of his value. We need not suppose that they believe the dead man to be conscious of what they are doing. It is to satisfy themselves that they decorate the corpse, not to satisfy the spirit. When a man is painted he feels that he has the regard and good-will of his fellows, and those who see him, at any rate in the instance of a bridegroom or initiate,

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realise that he has deserved their regard. So, to express their regard for the dead man they paint the inanimate body. Hence it is that the greater the esteem in which the dead man or woman is held, the greater is the care bestowed on the last painting.

We may conclude therefore that the painting of the body with white clay and the wearing of ornaments of *Dentalium* shell is a rite or ceremony by which the value of the individual to the society is expressed on appropriate occasions. We shall find confirmation of this later in the chapter.

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Before passing on to consider the meaning of other methods of decorating the body there is one matter that is worthy of mention. It is often assumed or stated that both personal ornament and dancing, amongst uncivilised peoples, are connected with sexual emotion. It is, of course, extremely difficult to disprove a statement of this sort. So far as the Andamanese are concerned I was unable to find any trace whatever of a definitely sexual element in either their dances or their personal adornment. It may be recalled that both men and women wear exactly the same ornaments on ceremonial occasions, and this is to some extent evidence that such have no sexual value. It is possible that some observers might see in the dance of the women (which is only performed on rare occasions) a suggestion of something of a sexual nature. I was unable to find that the natives themselves consider that there is anything suggestive of sex in either the dance of the men or that of the women. If it were true that the most important feature of the dance was that it appealed in some way to sexual feelings it is difficult to see how we are to explain the different occasions on which dancing takes place, as before a fight, at the end of mourning, etc., whereas these are adequately accounted for by the hypothesis that the dance is a method of expressing the unity and harmony of the society. Similarly the explanation of personal ornament as being connected with sexual feeling would fail to account for the occasions on which it is regarded as obligatory. There is therefore, I believe, no special connection between the dancing and personal ornament of the Andamanese and sexual feeling. It would still be possible to hold that there is a general

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The burial customs of the Andaman Islanders, however, are not to be regarded as simply the expression of natural personal feeling. They are a collective and ritual expression of a collective feeling. This is evident from the fact that they are regulated in every detail by custom. It is the duty of the relatives and friends to mourn, whether they feel sorrow or not, and it is equally their duty to mourn only for a certain period.

The cohesion of a social group, by which is maintained its existence as a group, depends directly on the existence of a collective system of sentiments or affective dispositions that bind every member to every other. The death, or removal by any other means, of a member of the group is a direct attack against these sentiments. Now whenever a sentiment of any kind is subjected to an attack of such a kind as this there are only two possible alternatives; either the sentiment must suffer a diminution of its intrinsic energy, and thus be less capable of controlling behaviour in the future; or it must find an outlet in an expressive action of some sort which serves as a reaction of defence or compensation and restores the sentiment to its former condition of strength. The typical example of such an emotional reaction is anger; anything that wounds our self-regarding feelings arouses our anger; if it did not do so those feelings would gradually weaken. This law holds true of collective sentiments as well as of individual sentiments. If the society permitted its solidarity to be attacked, whether by death or by any other means, without reacting in such a way as to give relief to wounded social feelings and so to reinstate them in their former condition, these sentiments would lose their strength and the society its cohesion. The burial customs of the Andamanese are to be explained, I believe, as a collective reaction against the attack on the collective feeling of solidarity constituted by the death of a member of the social group.

The man being dead, the first thing that the society does is to sever its connection with him, and the first step in this process is to get rid of the body by burying it or placing it in a tree, to abandon the camp at which he died, and temporarily to drop the use of his name. It is often supposed that customs such as these, which are found in many primitive societies, are due to the fear of the dead man's spirit. That there is an element of

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fear present is undoubtedly true, but this fear does not seem to be by any means instinctive, and therefore comparable to the fear that some animals exhibit towards the dead body of one of their species. On the contrary the fear itself needs to be explained, and this will have to be attempted later.

There is one group of facts which show very clearly that the burial customs are not solely due to an instinctive fear of dead bodies, namely that the customs vary according to the social position of the deceased. A child plays very little part in the general life of the community; hence on the death of a child the camp is not deserted and only the parents are subjected to the mourning ritual. Similarly the death of a person who has for long been so ill as not to be able to take any important part in social life has very little effect on the community as a whole; the body of such a one is disposed of with scant ceremony and mourning is perfunctory. On the other hand the death of a noted hunter in the prime of life, of a man who is esteemed as a leader, is a much greater loss; the whole community mourns for him; his body is placed on a tree instead of in the ground, showing that his death is regarded as something different from the death of a person who is interred. The body of a stranger who dies or is killed is not buried, but is thrown into the sea or cut up and burnt. The explanation that the natives give of this custom of burning the body is that it serves to dispel danger that might accrue from the presence of the dead body of a stranger. The blood and the fat of the dead man, from which they appear to fear evil influences, are, they say, driven up to the sky in the smoke of the fire and are thus rendered harmless.

There is, then, a close correspondence between the manner of burial and the social value of the person buried, and it is evident that the differences in the mode of disposing of the body are quite inexplicable on the assumption that the funeral customs are solely due to the fear of the dead.

Before burial the corpse is decorated with white clay and red paint. We have already seen that this is an expression on the part of the survivors of their regard for the deceased. A living man or woman is decorated in this way when, for some special reason, it is desired to express the fact that he or she has the

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good-will and regard of others, and it is applied to the dead body with exactly the same meaning. Fire and water are placed beside the grave. It is not necessary to suppose that the Andamanese believe that the spirit of the dead man makes any use of these, any more than it is necessary for us to believe that the spirit enjoys the flowers that it is our custom to place upon the grave. The action in each case is symbolical.

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The dead man was bound by ties of solidarity to those still living. Now that he is dead those ties have not ceased to exist, but continue until the society has recovered from the effects of the death, for they are based on deep-seated and elaborately organised sentiments. I believe that the mourning customs of the Andamanese are to be explained on this basis, as being the means by which the social sentiments of the survivors are slowly reorganised and adapted to the new condition produced by the death. The severance of the dead man from the society is not a sudden but a gradual process, during which his relatives and friends, being still attached to him by social ties, are in an abnormal condition which may be defined as a partial separation from the world of living men and women and a partial aggregation to the world of the dead (i.e. the spirit world). This abnormal condition of the mourner is shown chiefly in his or her withdrawal from participation in the ordinary life of the society. We have seen that the eating of food is, for the Andamanese, one of the most important of social actions, a kind of communion of the society, and that during the period of adolescence a youth is separated or withdrawn from the common life of the group by being forbidden to eat certain foods. So, in strict conformity with the same set of notions, the mourner is separated from the normal life of the society by being forbidden to eat pork or turtle, these being the most important foods that the Andamanese have[1]. Like the *aka-op*, also, the mourner is

[1] In a number of tribes of Western Australia I found an exactly similar custom. It was formerly the rule that after the death of a near relative the mourner must abstain from eating kangaroo, that being the largest game animal. Since the establishment of sheep stations in their country, with the consequent great decrease in numbers of the kangaroo, it has come about that the animal which now provides their most important supply of meat is the sheep, and the modern rule is that a mourner must not eat mutton.

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highly coloured, and failed, therefore, in imposing on the almost excusable credulity which existed at a time when next to nothing of a trustworthy nature was known concerning these savages. 114

22. With regard to a deceased husband's property, the widow disposes of everything, which she does not require for her personal use, among his male relatives. 768

23. It seems superfluous to add that no such custom as *suttee* prevails or has ever been known to exist among them. 764

Death and Burial.—1. Amongst other erroneous opinions held regarding these tribes is that which declares that "no lamentation is publicly made at death," whereas, in point of fact, the demonstrations of grief on such occasions are generally excessive, and are shared, in a greater or less degree, by every member of the community in which the melancholy event occurs. 763

2. In the case of an infant, the parents and relatives remain weeping for hours beside the corpse; afterwards they smear their persons with a wash composed of *ōg-* (the common olive-coloured clay) and water, and, after shaving their heads, place a lump of the same, called *del·a-*, just above their foreheads,[1] where it hardens, and is left, much to the individual's discomfort, until the expiration of the days of mourning;[2] should it fall off in the meantime it is renewed. 765 766

3. The burial usually takes place within 18 hours of the decease, which time is spent by the mother in painting the head, neck, wrists, and knees of her dead child with *kòi·ob-* and *tā·la-ōg-*; she also shaves off the hair, and folds the little limbs so as to occupy the least possible space,[3] the knees being brought up to the chin and the fists close to the shoulders; the body is then enveloped in large leaves, called *kā·pa-*,[4] which are secured with cords or strips of cane. The father meantime employs himself in digging a grave with an adze (*wō·lo-*[5]), in the place where his hut fire usually burns; when all is prepared the little head is uncovered, and the parents gently blow upon the face 766

fishing, which, as they seem to indicate a Munchausen-like facility of exaggeration in the narrator we decline to repeat" (Mouat).

[1] This applies to men, for women usually place the *del·a-* on the top of the head. It is worn by neither sex until after they have attained maturity, and only for a father, mother, husband, wife, brother, sister, son, or daughter, the *ōg-* wash alone being deemed sufficient "mourning" in the case of other relatives or friends.

[2] The term *ā·kā·ōg-* is therefore applied to mourners, since they are prohibited from the use of *kòi·ob-*.

[3] "If we knew no further details as to the opinions of the intellectually gifted Hottentots, formerly so greatly underrated, it would be enough that, previous to burial, they place the body of the deceased in the same position which it once occupied as an embryo in the mother's womb" (Peschel).

[4] *Vide* Appendix B, item 74.

[5] *Vide* Appendix B, item 15.

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the skull and bones back to his hut and breaks up the latter into small pieces suitable for necklaces.[1] The mother, after painting the skull with *kòi'ob-*, and decorating it with small shells attached to pieces of string, hangs it round her neck with a netted chain, called *rdb-*.[2] After the first few days her husband often relieves her by wearing it himself. Infants' skulls, being fragile, are generally preserved carefully from risk of injury by being entirely covered with string, but (except temporarily as when travelling, fishing, &c.) these souvenirs are not carried about in a basket. The next few days are spent by the mother in converting the bones into necklaces, called *chàu'ga-tâ-*, and when several have been made, she and her husband pay visits to their friends, among whom they distribute these mementoes, together with any of the pieces that may remain over, in order that they may make additional necklets for themselves. 765

6. Before this distribution takes place, it should be mentioned that the mourners remove from their heads the lump of clay placed there on the day of the child's death; the wife also paints her husband's neck, waist, wrists, and knees with *kòi'ob-* and further adorns him with a stripe of the same compound from his throat to his navel, and afterwards decorates herself in a similar manner. [302]

7. All due preparations having thus been made, the friends assemble round the hut to pay their final visit of condolence; whereupon the bereaved father sings some old song of his, which he last sang, perchance, with his little one alive and well in his arms, on which all except himself express their grief and sympathy by breaking out into loud lamentations. The chorus of the song is chanted by the women while the parents perform a dance which goes by the name of *t'i-tô latnga-* (*lit.*, the shedding of tears); when wearied with their exertions they retire to their hut, and cease from any further display of sorrow, whereupon their friends generally take up and continue the melancholy dance and song for many hours, the women being then joined by the men, who, till this stage of the proceedings, have merely acted the part of spectators. It should be explained that the character of this dance does not differ from that which is customary at a wedding or other occasion of rejoicing, except in the doleful appearance of the performers. 765 535

8. On the death of an adult and others, the relatives (as in the case of an infant) smear themselves with *ōg-* and place a lump of the clay on their heads, where it must remain until the *t'i-tô latnga-*; any necklaces, waistbelts, &c., which the deceased was wearing are removed; women then paint the 764

[1] *Vide* Appendix B, item 44.
[2] *Vide* Appendix B item 42.

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•764 corpse, whose limbs are folded and enwrapped in the manner above described.

9. What the true significance of this practice may be is not quite clear, as such of the aborigines as have been questioned assert that it is merely for convenience in removal; but since the custom is also observed in infant burials which, as I have mentioned, take place in the very hut wherein the death occurred, it seems probable that a deeper meaning underlies the act; and the real reason may be that which Peschel supplies in his reference to the Hottentots, who observe the same custom, *i.e.* "that the dead will mature in the darkness of the earth in preparation for a new birth."[1]

10. As it is not customary for females to attend the funeral, when *their* part is done, they gently blow upon the face, and take their last farewell look.

[766] 11. None save infants are buried within the encampment, all others being carried to some distant and secluded spot in the jungle, and there interred or placed upon a "machán," or platform; it is generally arranged beforehand which of these two methods shall be employed, but the latter is considered the more complimentary, apparently because it involves a little more labour.[2]

12. Arrived at their destination, the corpse, which has been carried by one of the men on his back, is put down, while the final preparations are being made. A spot is selected where there is a boulder or large tree,[3] to mark it, and there, if a grave has been decided on, they dig a hole about 4 or 5 feet deep, with an adze (*wōlo-*), into which the body is lowered in a sitting posture, facing the east; all present then raise the leaf covering the head, and take leave of their friend by blowing upon his face. Before the grave is filled in the cords or canes are cut, the object being to hasten the process of decomposition by loosening the leaves; a fire is lighted over the spot and a *gōb-*,[4] or nautilus shell, filled with water, as well as some article which belonged to the deceased, is placed beside it: then the surrounding brushwood for some little distance is cleared away, and *â·ra-* are suspended between the trees in the manner and for the purpose before stated.

13. Should it, however, have been determined to dispose of the corpse by the alternative method, a small stage is constructed

[1] This singular practice also prevailed amongst the ancient Peruvians (*vide* "Anthropology of Prehistoric Peru," by T. J. Hutchinson, "Journ. Anthrop. Inst.," vol. iv, p. 447, 1875).

[2] Old persons are generally buried.

[3] They never wittingly use the same tree or spot a second time, and are careful to remember those which served on a former occasion.

[4] *Vide* Appendix B, item 82, and "Journ. Anthrop. Inst.," vol. xi, p. 269.

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of sticks and boughs, about 8 to 12 feet above the ground, generally between the forked branches of some large tree,[1] and to it the body is lashed. The head is raised slightly, looking eastward, and, though the position of the arms is not altered, the cords are loosened to allow of the legs being straightened, after which the leaves are re-adjusted, so as to cover the entire form, in order to protect it from the attacks of hawks, crows, and vermin.

14. Two reasons are given for the practice of placing the corpse with the face towards the rising sun: one being that dissolution may thereby be hastened, the other that *jer·eg-* or Hades, whither the souls of the departed flee, is situated in the east.

15. The mourners take a last farewell in the manner before described, and fulfil the remaining duties, as related in the former case. The spirit of the deceased being supposed to haunt not only the spot where he has been buried, but also the encampment where the death occurred, the community migrate temporarily to another camping ground immediately after the return of the funeral party, leaving the *â·ra-* to witness to casual visitors of the cause of their absence.

16. When the period of mourning has expired, the men who assisted in the funeral rites return to the place of burial, destroy the *â·ra-*, and remove the remains of the deceased to the sea-shore, or to a creek, where the bones are cleaned and afterwards conveyed to the old encampment, whither they all return and restore their camp to its normal condition.

17. As all that has been related regarding the distribution of the bones of a child and the subsequent dance applies equally to all cases, further account of these ceremonies here is unnecessary; for fuller information anent the manufacture of the necklaces, &c., the reader is referred to an interesting paper by Dr. Allen Thomson, F.R.S., which will be found in the Journal of the Anthropological Institute for 1881.[2]

18. Although in the majority of cases the display of grief is thoroughly sincere, there is no doubt that they hope, by testifying to their sorrow in the various ways mentioned, to conciliate the spirits of the departed, and to be by them preserved from many misfortunes which might otherwise befall them.[3]

19. In the case of a young married couple who are childless, if either die, the survivor is not the chief mourner, and does not even assist at the obsequies, which are performed solely by

[1] They are careful not to select a fruit-tree, or one used for the manufacture of their canoes, bows, and other implements.

[2] *Vide* "Journ. Anthrop. Inst.," vol. xi, p. 295.

[3] *Vide post* "Religious Beliefs, &c.," paragraph 24.

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

765 the relatives of the deceased, one of whom subsequently takes possession of the skull, and wears it until he (or she) chooses to part with it, or is asked to do so by another member of the family. It should here be stated that it is by no means obligatory upon the survivor of an elderly couple, or any relative, to carry the bones or skull of the deceased for a lengthened period:[1] except in the event of marrying a brother, sister, or cousin of the deceased, these relics can be given at any time to a friend who may ask for them; thus it not unfrequently happens that the remains of one who was a chief or a favourite in his day, are scattered far and wide among his admirers, but when in course of time they get mislaid or broken, the owner is often easily reconciled to his loss, or makes it good by procuring similar mementoes of another and more recently departed friend.

20. It may be said that as a rule no adult is without at least one *chàu·ga-tâ-* (*i.e.*, a human bone necklace), and the skulls, which are generally to be found in every encampment, are worn by each in turn, if only for a few hours.

764 21. The only difference made on the occasion of the death of a chief, his wife, or one of his near relatives, is that *all* the men and lads of the encampment smear themselves with *ōg-*, and attend the funeral; the relations alone, however, are the mourners during the succeeding weeks or months which intervene before the *t'ī-tô·latnga-*, though, as a token of respect for the deceased, and of sympathy with the mourners, other members of the tribe often abstain from some favourite article of food, and take no part in festivities during the same period.

22. If a member of another tribe happen to die while on a visit, the body would be disposed of in one of the modes I have endeavoured to describe, after which intimation would be sent to the friends of the deceased, so that they might know where to seek for the skeleton when the time for disinterment should arrive.

766 23. The body of an enemy, stranger, or captive child would be thrown into the sea, or buried *sans cérémonie*, as the bones would 761 never be in request.

24. A sudden death is at once attributed to the malign influence of *ē·rem-chàu·gala*, if the deceased had been recently in the jungles, or to *jū·ru-win-*, if he had been on the sea; in either case one of the male relatives of the victim, representing the feelings of the community, approaches the spot where the body

[1] I mention this more especially as the erroneous statement made by some early writer, that "a widow wears her husband's skull suspended round her neck for the rest of her life," has been repeated in more recent accounts, and hitherto remains uncontradicted.

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58. *tâ·la-ōg-*.[1] White clay, used mixed with water, for ornamental painting of the person and of various articles, *e.g.*, bows, baskets, buckets, trays, &c.: the work is done by women: when painting their relatives they spare no pains in executing neat designs with their finger-nails.

[NOTE.—Women during pregnancy are in the habit of nibbling small quantities of this substance from time to time, in the belief that it is beneficial to their condition.]

59. *ōg-*. Common whitish-grey clay, lumps of which are found somewhat plentifully in various parts of the islands. It is used, mixed with water, for smearing over the body when the heat is oppressive.[2] A lump of it is placed on the top of the forehead as a symbol of bereavement, and kept there generally until the expiration of the mourning period.[3] It is also sometimes used by way of ornament on the person, by smearing the trunk and limbs with the wash and then, before it has had time to dry, passing the outspread finger-tips over the surface so as to form some pattern.[4]

60. *kòi·ob-*.[5] Red-ochre paint, which is made by mixing red oxide of iron, *ū·pla-* (*vide* next item), with some greasy substance, the fat of the pig or turtle, sometimes of the iguana, dugong, &c., and occasionally the oil of an almond, called *ē·mej-*, is used. This pigment is applied to the person either ornamentally or otherwise. It is accredited with hygienic properties,[6] and from its mode of application it can be readily determined whether the wearer is suffering or rejoicing. The nostrils and centre of the upper lip are occasionally painted with it, as the smell of the fat is agreeable to them.[7] Before a corpse is removed for burial it is smeared over the face and neck with this paint as a mark of respect, and in order to please the departed spirit.

61. *ū·pla-*. Red oxide of iron after it has been dried and baked. It is principally used in making the pigment described in the preceding paragraph. It is also employed in the manufacture of the red wax, called *kâ·ngatâ-būj-* (*vide* next item).

62. *kâ·ngatâ-būj-*. Red wax, generally prepared by men, composed of *á·ja-pūd-*, *rīm-*, and *ū·pla-* (items 56, 55, and 61); in the absence of the last-named ingredient *kòi·ob-* (item 60) is

[1] *Vide* Part III, "Painting," paragraph 7.
[2] *Vide* Part I, "Anatomy and Physiology," paragraph 5.
[3] *Vide* Part II, "Death and Burial," paragraphs 2, 6, 8, and footnote [1].
[4] *Vide* Part III, "Painting," paragraphs 5 and 6.
[5] *ū·pla-* is collected chiefly during the dry months; in its natural condition, as found, it is called *kòi·ob-ch·ū·lnga-*; in that condition it is applied to sores, and to the persons of fever patients; it is administered internally for coughs, fevers, &c. (*vide* Part I, "Medicine," paragraphs 4 and 5).
[6] *Vide* Part I, "Medicine," paragraph 2.
[7] *Vide* Part I, "Odour."

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373 dancing by night: the resin is obtained from a large tree called by them *maiī-*, which also is often employed in the construction of their largest canoes. A larger description of torch is made by men, and used when fishing by night.

71. *lâ·pi-*. Gurjon wood torch, obtained from the heart of rotten logs of the *Dipterocarpus lævis* (Andam., *â·rain-*): as these do not burn so readily as the *tō·ug-* (item 70) they are rarely used outside their huts.

415 [462] 72. *pū·kuta-yât-mâk·nga-*.[1] Food tray, made by men of some soft wood, generally of the large flat buttress roots of the trees (*Sterculiaceæ*) of which their canoes are made.

764 [462] 73. *â·ra-*. Long fringe-like cane-leaf wreaths, which are made by women, and suspended from trees, &c., round an encampment or hut where a death has occurred, and round the spot where the corpse is deposited in order to warn off persons inadvertently approaching the place, which is believed to be haunted by the spirit of the deceased.[2]

285 [462] 74. *kâ·pa-jâ·tnga-*. Fan-like screen, made by women, of a description of palm-leaf (Andam., *kâ·pa-*), two of which are fastened together with leaf stems: it is used for many purposes, amongst others as a protection from rain and from the direct rays of the sun in hot weather; in the absence of a *pār·epa-* (item 23) it is often used as a sleeping mat, and it serves also as a wrapper for bundles of various kinds.

75. *kâ·pa-*. Leaf wrappers, as described above, are employed for storing and packing the red oxide of iron.

293 76. *ūj-*.[3] Long brush-like shavings of the *Tetranthera lancæfolia*, prepared by men with the sharp edge of a *Cyrena* shell. When dancing these are often held (by both sexes) in their hands, or are stuck in their waistbelts or other personal ornaments.

412 77. *kô·no-*.[4] Iron knife used in cutting up food; to some a wooden or iron skewer is attached, they are then called *châm-chô-*.

78.[5]

291 79. *ō·bunga-*. Species of apron, consisting of one to six leaves of the *Mimusops Indica* (Andam., *dō·gota-*), which are fastened to the lowest *bōd-* by women from motives of modesty;[6] the leaves are not spread out so as to cover a wide surface, but are laid one above the other, and removed separately as each becomes stiff and shrivelled: the reason given for the selection of this

[1] *Vide* Plate VII, fig. 16.
[2] *Vide* Part II. "Death and Burial," paragraph 3.
[3] *Vide* Plate VIII, fig. 37.
[4] *Vide* Plate VIII, fig. 21.
[5] This No. is attached to "Specimens of Andamanese Hair" (*vide* footnote 1, p. 175).
[6] *Vide* Part I, "Psychology and Morals," paragraph 8, and footnote.

3: Temple G-5 (1901) 1903 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

The "womb-name" is called the *teng-l'ar-ula* and on the child being born, the words distinguishing sex by the genitals, *ota*, male, and *kato*, female, are prefixed to it in babyhood. The women's "flower name" precedes the *teng-l'ar-ula* till motherhood or advancing years, but is often used alone. As the "flower names" are of much interest, the following list of them is given in the Bea language. There are eleven of them and flowers, regarded as identical by the Andamanese, belong to trees sometimes of quite different species: a mistake that is made by peoples of much higher mental development.

Flower name.	Tree.	Flowering month.
Moda	(1) Semecarpus (Sp.) (2) Odina wodier	March.
Ora	Chickrassia tabularis	March.
Jidga	(1) Unidentified (2) Croton argyratus	April.
Yeri	Sterculia (Sp.)	April.
Pataka	(1) Melhorma simplicifolia (2) Terminalia procera	May.
Reche	(1) Eugenia (Sp.) (2) Rubiaceæ	June. July.
Chagara	Pterocarpus dalbergioides	August.
Charapa	Unidentified	September.
Chenra	Lees sambucina	October.
Yulu	(1) Unidentified (2) Eugenia (Sp.)	November.
Chilip	Diospyros densiflora	November, December, January and February.

The people are now ignorant of the origin of the flower names or of the cause of the selection of the trees above mentioned.

The honorifics *maia* and *mam* are prefixed out of respect to the name of elderly males and *chana* to all names of married women. Girls are addressed by the flower name and the elders by the honorific. Names are not much used in addressing, but chiefly for naming the absent or in calling.

Marriage Relations.—The Andamanese are monogamous, and by preference, but not necessarily, exogamous as regards sept and endogamous as regards tribe or more strictly group. Divorce is rare and unknown after the birth of a child, unfaithfulness after marriage which entails the murder of both the guilty parties if practicable is not common, and polyandry, polygamy, bigamy and incest are unknown. Marriages are not religious, but are attended with distinct ceremonies. Marriage after death of one party or divorce is usual. Before marriage free intercourse between the sexes within the exogamous limits is the rule, though some conventional precautions are taken to prevent it.

Portman tersely describes the marriage ceremony thus—

"When the elders of a sept are aware that a young couple are anxious to marry, the bride is taken to a newly made hut and made to sit down in it. The bridegroom runs away into the jungle, but after some struggling and pretence at hesitation, is brought in by force and made to sit in the bride's lap. This is the whole ceremony. The newly married couple have little to say to and are very shy of each other for at least a month after marriage, when they gradually settle down together."

Marriages are the business of parents or guardians and they have a right of betrothal of children, the betrothal being regarded as a marriage. Marital relations are somewhat complicated and quite as strictly observed as among civilised communities. Old books on this point generally ascribe bestiality and promiscuity to the race, but quite wrongly.

Death Ceremonies.—Deaths occasion loud lamentation from all connected with the deceased. Babies are buried under the floor of their parents' hut. Adults are either buried in a shallow grave, or, as an honour, tied up in a bundle and placed on a platform in a tree. Wreaths of cane leaves are then fastened conspicuously round the encampment, and it is deserted for about three months. Burial spots are also sufficiently well marked. Mourning is observed by smearing the head with grey clay and refraining from dancing for the above period. After some months the bones of the deceased are washed, broken up and made into ornaments, to which great importance is attached, as mementos of the deceased and as they are believed to stop pain and cure diseases by simple application to the diseased part. The skull is worn down the back tied round the

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

spot for centuries leads to the formation of kitchen-middens [1]. In the temporary camps something similar happens: the only difference consists in the fact that rubbish dumps only accumulate at the back of the temporary shelters, as a consequence of their peculiar shape that I shall not describe here. These dumps are heaven-sent love nests for insects of many species, mostly flies of a metallic green colour. They follow the Onge from camp to camp and thrive on scraps from human meals. When travelling in Little Andaman I was unmistakably warned of the nearby presence of Onge camps by the appearance of those familiar living beings.

The filth that coats the floors of communal Onge huts offers an ideal breeding ground also for myriads of fleas. Dogs spread them all over Little Andaman. Owing to the fact that the communal huts are deserted for months at a time during the dry season, the fleas become hungry and assault human beings vehemently whenever possible. When visiting empty communal huts I myself, and the persons with me, were plagued by such assaults. Fleas advanced suddenly from feet to head in thick, shimmering brown layers, covering first our legs. We were obliged to strip and douse ourselves with insect-repellents. As for other parasites, including ticks and mosquitos, equally plentiful in Little Andaman, the Onge do not appear to be inconvenienced by them.

The communal huts are used for another purpose as well, unhygienic but of high ethnological interest: the interment of human corpses. When they die, the inmates are buried beneath their beds. In other words, communal huts are also cemeteries. Many human skeletons are found by digging under the beds. Until 1952 this fact was unknown about the Andaman Islanders although it is encountered in all Onge communal huts without exception. An analysis of this custom led to further discoveries: the Onge wish to compel the spirit of a deceased person to remain close to the living as a protection, so they offer it the communal hut for an abode, the idea being that a spirit cannot wander far from the bones of its former body. A series of Onge practices point to this belief: felled enemies must be burned and reduced to ashes in order to render them harmless. Their hostile souls, according to the Onge, rise toward the sky in smoke as the bones are consumed. For the same reason, bones of relatives are fashioned into necklaces. The most conspicuous of these is the *ibidanghe*, worn generally by women and young girls, which is made from a decorated human jawbone. The aim is to obtain the assistance of the departed relation in fighting illness and bad luck. Direction in hunting, fishing and even quarrelling is supposed to come from the dead kept close to the living. We can trace this belief on the connection between bones and souls to a remote origin: Southern Asia megaliths had, in my opinion, no other cause for offering shelter to spirits and promoting useful relations between the living and the dead. I reached this conclusion after studying the contemporary habits of Travancore mountain and other Indian tribes, particularly the Munda. In Nias we find traces of the same customs as among different peoples of Indonesia and Oceania, who

[1] I discussed this at the two international anthropological congresses of 1952 (Vienna) and 1956 (Philadelphia), and have more to say on the subject in my book about the Onge.

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

now follow them, often ignoring their original significance and symbolism. Among the Onge, spirits are feared but not loved ; the same applies to God Himself.

The Onge bury their dead in trenches, no deeper than three feet. Earth is tightly packed over the graves in order to prevent exhalations. Full details on the subject of Onge burial customs appear in the book that I am writing about the Onge. I slept with the Onge in communal huts that contained fresh graves, without suffering any inconvenience from the smell of the corpses. This recalls the palaeolithic sepulchral caves, where man probably lived as the Onge live in their sepulchral huts today.

There are no latrines near Onge camps – whether permanent or temporary. Excrements are spread carelessly all around, lightly covered with leaves and earth. Flies lay eggs on them. The Onge's only precaution is not to defecate where drinking water might be found after rainfall. With so many opportunities for reproduction, in some places flies form such clouds as to impress the natives themselves. In the north of Little Andaman a creek was named after the flies : Bumila Creek, which means "fly creek". Smells also occasionally inspire geographical names : Tambe-é-bûŕe, on the north-east coast of Little Andaman, means "the smelly place" in the Onge language. Flies, fleas and ticks are tolerated by the Onge who do not fight them. Fortunately, the hymenoptera collect flies for their nests, not, however, in quantities large enough to compete with the fertility of the species.

2. Clothing and personal care

The only garment worn by Little Andaman women is the *naquinēghĕ*, a scanty grasslike apron covering the genitals. In addition, during menstrual periods, Onge women wear the *bataghĕ*, for hygienic purposes. This is a simple cluster of long, soft green leaves cut by the husband for his wife from special trees : Myristica longifolia and others. The only leaves used are those from the end of a stalk, a section of which is left attached to the leaves. The stalk is slipped under the *naquinēghĕ*, while the long leaves are passed between the thighs to be fastened at the back above the buttocks. It is curious to see Onge women in such myristical attire ! The *bataghĕ* is ethnographical news, new not only as regards the Andamans : it is an interesting indication of the hygienic measures employed by primitive people, and can probably be traced to prehistoric practices in analogous circumstances. The continental and insular regions nearest to the Andamans have retained no similar custom ; their only practice is the strict isolation of menstruating women. Among the Onge, on the other hand, they are allowed free circulation. Washing is unknown to the Onge : they never wash their bodies intentionally. Brushing through the thick forest and diving into the sea or the river to collect food substitute adequately for washing. The Little Andaman forest is nearly always dripping ; moving among the trees, specially in the early morning, is equivalent to bathing. The contact of wet leaves when walking cleans the Onge's skin, for they go naked ; and as they constantly dive into the sea and rivers, they do not smell. Actually they give an impression of cleanliness – as opposed to many other dark-skinned

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

rule the multiplication and growth of the various animals and plants useful to Man.

The Onges do not love Eiuga, or any of the other spirits. They merely fear them, and seek to evade their anger by various expedients. It is curious that they never hesitate to try and deceive the spirits and think themselves very clever when they manage to steal roots or tubers from the ground. Nor do they revere the spirits of their ancestors; these are to be feared and propitiated by preservation of their bones. By definition none of the spirits, since they can be deceived by simple tricks, can be all-powerful, but this conclusion, simple though it is, is still beyond the Onges' powers of reasoning.

The Onges' fear of the dead is instanced by their carrying round their necks the *ibidanghe*, or necklet of human jaws, as a propitiation. The wearing of the bones prevents the spirit from going away (by analogy the bones of dead enemies are burned to force the spirit, clearly a hostile one, to leave the place). The custom of burial within the communal hut follows the same logic – the spirits of the dead are kept near their bones and hence near their relatives, to help them in the daily round of hunting, fishing and gathering food.[1]

Unlike most of the other peoples whose burial customs are even today based on their underlying principles, the Onges have not progressed beyond the stage of relating the dead directly to the demands of daily life; they have no 'practices' of any kind, no concept at all of holy places, prayers or images. Even the very names of the dead are soon forgotten. Their fears, however, are none the less very real. They do not like to speak of Eiuga or even of the lesser spirits, for fear of attracting their attention.

The Onges have no stories or explanatory legends, like those reported by Brown for Great Andaman. They have only short epics, if such they may be called, recalling extraordinary events in

[1] This belief is of very remote origin, and can be traced back at least to the megaliths of southern Asia, like the splendid ones which I was able to photograph, among others, in the mountains of Travancore. Here again the object was to prevent the dead from leaving their relatives. Similar ideas are found today in India among several tribes, notably the Munda, or Nias, and among various peoples of Indonesia, and even Oceania. The rituals are probably followed today without any understanding of their meaning or symbolism; the details vary from place to place, but the underlying principle, the original fear, remains the same everywhere.

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16 Making a roof section from palm fronds for a permanent dwelling

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[764]

17 Completed permanent dwelling, which is also used for burial of the inhabitants

[facing P. 66, K]

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among the Onges) of wearing not only necklaces of the carpals and tarsals of deceased kin or pieces of rib, but also, in some groups, the skulls, painted with ochre and hanging from a cord round the neck. The long bones, painted red and white, were reburied in the communal hut. The Onges of today carry only the coloured jawbones of their kin.

No ornaments were found in the middens, nor did we expect to find any, as at death the Onges (and presumably their ancestors) bury all the personal objects of the deceased secretly in the forest, where the termites destroy all traces.

Not all the Arioto can have carried skulls and jawbones. Some clearly carried neither, as all the bones are sometimes found in the middens. A few middens are completely without human bones, particularly in the Port Blair area. Nevertheless at Ciauldari (or Chowldary), ten kilometres to the west, I found in January 1954 long bones without the skull or jawbones, and at Maya Bandar in 1953 I saw almost complete skeletons, not in anatomical position, owing to exhumation and reburial, but including skull, jawbones and in a number of cases the small bones as well.

The evidence of the middens thus clearly shows that burial and subsequent customs differed considerably among the various groups of islanders in the past, as they do today. The majority, judging from the Onges, seem to have remained faithful to a given custom, the dead in all cases continuing to remain a part of the group, whether or not any particular bone was carried about by the members of the group.

It is somewhat surprising to find customs varying so markedly in so primitive and numerically small a population, even though isolated in groups. The explanation lies in the fact that long-established customs may be altered overnight as the result of a 'revelation' by some seer, only to have the new customs overthrown themselves in the course of time by the next 'revelation'. I had an experience of this in the Onges when Enagaghe, a well-known seer, announced one day that he had received an order from the spirits about the way in which hunting trophies were to be displayed. No longer were pig jawbones to be impaled one behind the other on poles hung horizontally along the sloping roof of the hut a little above the hunter's bed. The whole skull, including the jawbones, was to be preserved, the bones held together in their natural

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position by reed cords, which were to be tied in front of the snout, ending in a cord by which the skull was to be hung above the hunter's bed. No sooner said than done, and at the beginning of 1954 all the old trophies were thrown out into the forest, to be gradually replaced by the new ones. Fortunately I had collected some of the old trophies before the 'revelation'!

From the evidence of the middens it would appear that these variations in burial customs have no practical basis, and probably all derive from similar 'revelations'. Further investigations in a large series of the deposits, enabling dated comparisons to be made, would be extremely revealing.

Even allowing for these sudden alterations in established customs, it is clear that their elaboration indicates slow and hardly perceptible development over long periods of time and the middens must be dated in millennia. The hypothesis put forward by some scholars that the Andamanese are descended from negro slaves who escaped while on their way to the Portuguese colonies in India in the sixteenth or, at the earliest, fifteenth centuries, seems therefore quite untenable, in face of the abundant evidence in favour of the great antiquity of the middens and of the people who built them up.

It seems clear that during the last few thousand years, successive waves of migration have taken place over a whole area bounded on the west by the Andamans and Nicobars. All indications point to a close connection between the Andamanese and the peoples to the westward, the Negrito element remaining alone and almost untouched in the Andamans, but becoming submerged in the Nicobars into the mongoloid element of more recent origin. Even today a number of Nicobarese show signs of Negrito ancestry; short in stature, they have crinkly hair which although long is very different from the straight black hair of the mongoloid element, and their heads, noses and lips bear clear signs of Negrito ancestry.

In addition to these more general conclusions the middens also cast some light on the origin, still somewhat problematical, of the wretched Jarawas of Great Andaman. Comparisons between their middens and those of the Onges show that there were in the past communal huts on Great Andaman exactly the same as those still extant today on Little Andaman.

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The continual fighting between the Eremtaga and the Arioto led, as we have seen, to the gradual disappearance of the communal huts of the latter as being too vulnerable. Subsequently, the conflict still going on between foreigners and Jarawas completed the destruction, so that there are now no communal huts on Great Andaman. The ever-increasing violence of the punitive expeditions against the Jarawas put an end to their numerical recovery during the last fifteen years or so, and there may indeed now be none left. Today only their kitchen-middens, and the surviving Onges, remain to show us how the Jarawas must have lived.

The Jarawa middens are distinguishable from those of the Arioto by their inland position and by their content of freshwater shellfish and land gasteropods, not eaten by the peoples of the coast.

Like the kitchen-middens of the Onges, those of the Jarawas contain human bones clearly interred in graves, and not scattered among the refuse. This refutes the Arioto accusation against the Eremtaga of cannibalism, and that of the people of South Andaman (now vanished) against the people of North Andaman and the Onges; the remains of cannibal feasts would undoubtedly have been found among kitchen refuse and not carefully buried in the ritual manner, with the graves filled in with earth. And the Jarawas and the majority of the Arioto buried their dead in the communal huts, continuing a custom which originated while they were still on Little Andaman. In time variations arose, but this does not alter the evidence in favour of migration in ancient times from the south, via the Nicobars and Little Andaman.

The differences in culture between the islands can be explained by the ease with which primitive peoples forget. The Jarawas, for example, although they reached Great Andaman by sea from Little Andaman, forgot in a few generations the art of hollowing canoes when they were forced to live in the depths of the forests, far from the sea. Today, they have been free from the Arioto for some time, at least on the west coast, and have access to the sea, but they have not started building canoes again. In other things, however, such as burial rites, the Jarawas kept faithful to the old Onge customs; their middens show the same exhumation of the bones, the same cleaning, and tinting with ochre, and careful reburial.

The general similarity of the middens in Great and Little Andaman cannot be due to chance. Animal food, for example, has clearly

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been cooked in the same way; the bones are never charred, but always have the appearance of being cooked in an earth oven. The direct roasting of large game over the fire, postulated by some authorities, including Brown, was never practised; the islanders preferred to go on as they had done since time immemorial, because it was more efficient – witness the traces of the earth oven which are to be found all over the world, including Europe. In Polynesia and Micronesia, and among the pygmies of Asia and Africa, it was widely used; variations when they arose did so as the result of local circumstances, like that of throwing water on the fire instead of using fleshy leaves, when there were none in the area. But the basic principle remained the same everywhere, and the use of the earth oven coincides with the geographical distribution of hunting, gathering and burial customs similar to those found in the Andamans.

In April 1954 I excavated the midden at Tambe-e-buiè on Little Andaman, abandoned after the earth tremors of 1951, to investigate the position of the beds. The custom of burying the dead underneath their beds made it possible to trace the latter by the human remains below them, arranged in a circle round the periphery. The Onges themselves helped in the work, sometimes even trying to recognize the remains as they came to light.[1] There were clear signs of reburial. The body is buried immediately after death at least one metre deep; whereas after exhumation, cleaning and colouring, it is never re-interred more than thirty centimetres below the floor of the hut. When another death makes it necessary for a new grave to be dug under the bed, the piles of bones from the second are disturbed, so that in time a form of ossuary develops. In this it is not possible to identify the various remains of individuals unless some change in the position of the hut, even by a few metres, preserves the bones from disturbance by fresh graves. Traces of the graves always remain, however, as they are invariably filled with fresh earth.

We have already seen that on Little Andaman the introduction of the dog reduced the consumption of shellfish (and hence the rate

[1] The material recovered is now in the Anthropological Museum of the Andamans and Nicobars, which I helped to establish at Port Blair. The museum was inaugurated on 6 June 1955 in the presence of the Governor, Mr A. K. Ghosh and the chief Indian officials of the town.

THE ANDAMAN ISLANDERS

622 groups of families. There is some spontaneous recognition of individuals as 'headmen' as a result of some generally accepted superiority of physique or discernment, but the concept goes no further than the giving of some weight to their views within the group.

13 MARRIAGE

595 837 585 The Onges are monogamous, like all peoples who have never progressed beyond the stage of hunting and gathering, and adultery is virtually unknown. Marriage consists merely of the man taking possession of the woman in the presence of the rest of the group, taking her by the hand to a new bed built for the occasion and allotted a place within the circle. The 'marriage' takes place in the late evening and is followed by frenzied dancing all night long by the light of the resin torches. The total absence [194] of any form of ritual leads one to suppose isolation from a very early date indeed, but this cannot be more than conjecture.

14 BURIAL

172 174 764 The custom of burying the dead in caves still occupied by the living apparently existed in the Palaeolithic era. The practice has continued to the present time in the Andamans, where the dead are still buried under the family bed in the communal hut. It is known from Palaeolithic burials that even in that era objects were sometimes buried with the dead, and it is thus possible that the culture of the Andamans dates back to very early times.

15 EXHUMATION AND SECOND BURIAL

172 765 The custom of exhuming the bones of the dead and re-interring them after coloration (in this case with ochre) dates from the Palaeolithic era.

16 BONE NECKLACES

301 The custom of wearing necklaces of carpals, tarsals, phalanges and fragments of rib, is of extreme antiquity, and apart from the Andamans, has virtually disappeared.

17 RELIGION

172 765 764 There is evidence that even in Palaeolithic times there existed a belief in the survival of the spirit after death, and a fear of its return (hence the

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

dead were buried securely bound in a knee-to-chest position, still the custom among the Andamanese). The Onges go no further than this and the idea of a Lord of the Spirits who rules all things, although on Great Andaman there has been some progress towards more anthropomorphic concepts. The complete absence of any form of cult, prayer, representation, or votive offering cannot, I feel, be the result of cultural decline from a more advanced age; this would have resulted in gross distortion and illogical superstition, but not in complete absence of any 'religious' practices of any kind.

18 SACRIFICE

No sacrifices of any kind are practised in the Andamans, nor is there any concept of propitiation, although there is evidence that even in the late Palaeolithic era some form of ritual sacrifice was practised, at least in Europe and probably over a much wider area. One would assume from this, and from paragraph 17 above, that the Andamanese is an even older culture.

19 TABOOS

Although my own experiences among the Onges have led me to think that taboos do not exist, some authors have asserted (in my view wrongly) their existence on Great Andaman. It is not, however, possible to draw any reliable conclusions on this point.

20 CEREMONIAL

The complete absence of any form of ritual surrounding birth, the purification of women, initiation, etc., or evidence of any such ritual in the past, is striking, in view of the prevalence in all the surrounding areas of strictly observed ceremonial for many occasions. As in the case of religion, such complete absence can only mean that the Andamanese became isolated before the idea of ritual spread to the area.

21 MEASUREMENT

The Andamanese have no means of counting, and no words to express gradations of time or size; to them everything is either 'small' or 'big'. They take no interest in the passing of years, and have no idea of their own age. To them life is but the passing of the seasons and the harvests of game and fish and fruits that they bring. This utter lack of any sense